

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

First Record of a Herald Petrel *Pterodroma arminjoniana* in Western Australia. - On 31 May 1992 one of us (T.K.) observed a strange gadfly-petrel over Varanus Island, Lowendal Islands, Western Australia. The bird was circling part of the island during the day, calling continuously (high pitched short screeches) and chasing other birds that entered the area

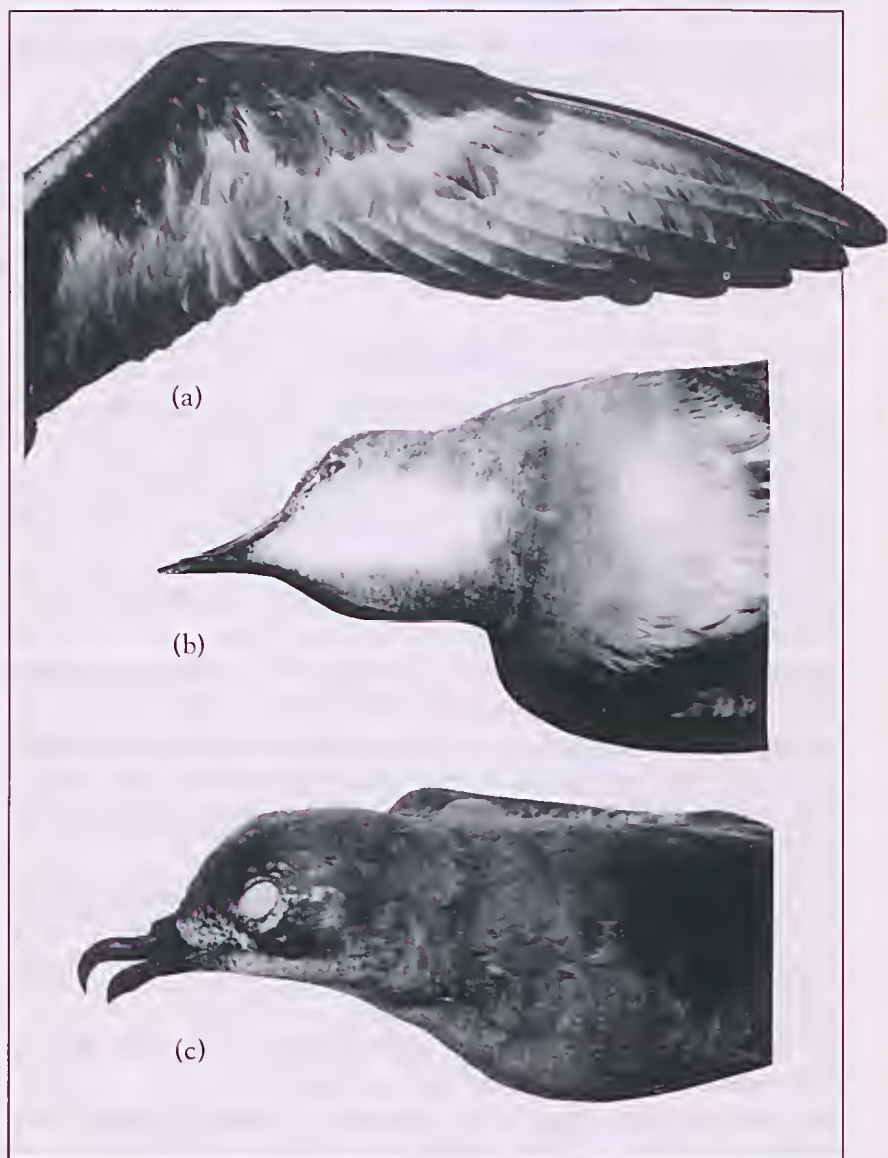


Figure 1. Herald Petrel showing (a) underwing pattern, (b) breast band and (c) facial pattern.

including Crested Tern, Kestrel, Brahminy Kite and Osprey. The following day the bird was killed when it flew into the blades of a helicopter. The remains were collected and donated to the Western Australia Museum where it was prepared into a study skin (registered number A 24536) and identified as a Herald Petrel *Pterodroma aminjoniana* (Giglioli and Salvadori).

Details of the the specimen are as follows: adult female with ovary 16 x 8 mm; total length 328 mm; exposed culmen 27.0 mm, entire culmen 38.0 mm; culmen width 13.7 mm; wing 278 mm; tail 101 mm; tarsus 32 mm; middle toe and claw 46 mm; forehead dark greyish brown the feathers narrowly edged whitish giving a scalloped appearance; lores mostly white flecked with greyish brown; a few white flecks over eye; crown, nape and back dark greyish brown (the feathers with concealed white bases and some short white filoplumes on nape); sides of neck grading to greyish brown; wings, rump and the few remaining tail feathers blackish brown, the inner webs of primaries grading to white; indistinct blackish line from gape to below eye; chin and centre of throat white; sides of throat and broad breast band grey (see Figure 1); belly white; flanks grey or brownish grey, most feathers with concealed white bases; axillaries dark greyish brown; marginal underwing coverts (from armpit almost to shoulder) white, rest dark greyish brown or blackish brown; lesser and median coverts mostly grey or blackish brown; greater secondary coverts grey grading to white basally; greater primary coverts white with broad grey tip; primaries blackish on outer web and tip, basal two-thirds of inner web white (forming a broad white patch on outer wing (see Figure 1); secondaries and tertiaries mostly grey with concealed white bases; undertail coverts white basally, grey distally; bill black; legs and feet pink with distal two-thirds of toes and webs blackish.

The Herald Petrel breeds on islands in the south Atlantic Ocean (Trinidad and Martin Voz Rocks) and in the southern Indian Ocean (Round Island off Mauritius) and also on islands in the tropical Pacific (including Raine and islands as far east as Easter Island) [Peters (1979) *Checklist of birds of the World* 1 p. 71]. In Australian waters it is recorded breeding in small numbers on Raine Island and four pairs were suspected breeding on North Keeling Island in 1986 (Stokes, T., and P. Goh 1987. *Aust. Bird Watcher* 12: 132-2).

The Western Australian specimen matches well with photographs taken of a light morph bird on North Keeling in 1986. Based on the possible breeding on North Keeling Island and the territorial behaviour of the Western Australian bird it would appear that this species may be expanding its range into the tropical eastern Indian Ocean.

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Short-nosed Bandicoot *Isoodon obesulus* on Culeenup Island - On visits to Yunderup Nature Observatory (YNO), Culeenup Island, Murray River delta (21-3-92, 16-5-92, 31-5-92), observations were made on the Short-nosed Bandicoot *Isoodon obesulus*. These included two sightings, the first on a walk track between the YNO and the large ephemeral lake en route to Cooper's